

NEWTON YOUTH COMMISSION Meeting
March 11, 2015 MINUTES
Location: Senior Center

Present: Eliza Beth, Jessica Tharaud, John Kusiak, Benji Cole, Mira Li, Meirose
Neal, Anton Malin
Staff: Jenny O'Higgins, Jenna Olson
Advisory Board Adults: John Panica, Matt Green, Susan Swick, Kirsten Tuohy, Heather
Byrns, Marcy Davidson, Joe DeVito, Ruth Goldman, Chris Hardiman,
Stephanie Lapham, Kathy Marchi

The meeting was opened at 6:36 by Chairperson, Jessica Tharaud.

Motion by Eliza Beth to accept the February minutes passed as amended.

Budget Report:

Budget for the year: \$2,500

Balance: \$2,400

Business:

Discussion of Drug Free Communities Grant:

- Grant: \$125,000 per year for up to 10 years
- The Youth Commission would receive updates at monthly meetings, and the members could volunteer at funded events or programs as well as being part of a subcommittee focused on the grant.
- Objectives and plans for the grant:
 - Increasing education for adults and youth (resource library, workshops, materials)
 - Pursuing vigorous media advocacy/ social marketing campaign (newspaper articles, PSAs on radio and local cable, social media campaign, linking to Ask A Newton Teen)
 - Trainings for commission and community (QPR, Mental Health first aid, substance abuse training, leadership development, peer to peer trainings or groups)
 - Online screening tool (eChug or other program)
 - Decrease access to prescription medications (take back days, safe drop boxes, education around these issues)
- Brainstorm of additional ideas for the grant from the Youth Commission:
 - Possible position of Youth Outreach Program Coordinator to work on substance abuse among youth
 - Discussion of smoking at Newton high schools and city property and role of grant in enforcement (long term goal of grant rather than immediate for next year)
 - Drug and alcohol programs beyond freshman year in health classes Newton high schools (also supporting and providing resources to other

members of the community – youth who are homeschooled or attend private school)

- Education/ forums for parents
 - General program for parents of all middle or high school students before problems occur
 - Concerning substance abuse (as well as additional information on responsible decision making in all areas such as driving, mental health, etc.) rather than after problems occur
 - Casual meetings that are accessible and convenient to all parents (varied times/ days)
- Partnership with Newton Cares to discuss mental health issues as well as substance abuse
- Working with mental health clubs at Newton North and Newton South
- Outreach from youth (student speakers leading discussions in the community)
- Website to have central source on city website for resources and information – using grant to promote the site
 - Additional possibility of making clear, laid out plans and resources on cards or pamphlets for students at guidance counselor's office or other locations at high schools
- Discussion of perception of harm of substance abuse among youth and parents
 - During first year of grant, generating a survey identifying who to implement programs to and receiving data about perception of harm to use for future planning and ideas
- Providing resources for youth who have parents or other family members struggling with substance abuse
- Funds for effective communicators (parents or outside speakers)
 - Working with counselors at high schools

Announcements:

- Mental health awareness conference
 - Invitation for youth to speak on panel discussing resilience and participation as youth leaders on May 8
- Education in leadership award from district attorney's office
- Announcement concerning nominations for youth awards

Next meeting date is April 8th from 6:30 – 7:30 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:43 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Alexa Lyons, Commissioner and Secretary.